

**ARCH Group's aim: "To show our love for God and You"**



**Weekly Notices**  
**8<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**



**Today's Collect**

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.

**Today's Post Communion Prayer**

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Next Week's Services: Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

8.30 am	Church Lench	Holy Communion*
9.30 am	Harvington	Holy Communion+
6.30 pm	Rous Lench	Carol Service

**Opportunities for Generosity**

We have a Reverse Advent Calendar running at St James', collecting items to support Caring Hands food bank. Our regular boxes are also available to help those in need in all our churches.

We will ensure they get there before Christmas!

*Treats and toiletries gratefully received.*

## **For Prayer**

Lord God, as we gather today to rejoice in your loving plan to send your Son to save the world, we pray for any who are struggling to see the way forward. Worries and difficult situations often seem worse at this time of year, when others are partying and making plans for Christmas and the new year ahead. We pray that your love will enfold them, and your light illuminate their way.

**We say with Zechariah, 'the rising sun will come to us from heaven'.**

Father, as we lovingly gather gifts for friends and family, we remember those to whom we can no longer give, because they have gone before us into your presence. We pray for all who feel the absence of loved ones keenly at this time of year. May your love be the bridge between heaven and earth, reminding us that we are apart only for a while.

**We say with Zechariah, 'the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death'.**

Lord, as Christmas cards land on our doormats, perhaps with letters telling of travel and adventure, or achievements and family pride, we pray for those who have little to tell this year; those who have suffered disappointments and defeats, whose hopes have faltered and come to nothing. Your love is both comfort and encouragement to keep going, to have faith; may your Holy Spirit inspire them to persevere.

**We say with Zechariah, 'the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the path of peace'.**

Father, for a war-torn world we pray, and for leaders who must make difficult decisions every day; and for your Church, often struggling to make its voice heard amongst the clamour of opposing views and strife. May we here, in our own community, be carriers of your love to those who are confused by life; bombarded by too much news, bewildered perhaps by choices to be made and their consequences for ourselves and others; let your love reign in our hearts, and bring peace.

**We say, in fulfilment of Zechariah's song: 'The rising sun has come to us from heaven. He shines on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. He guides our feet into the path of peace.' Amen.**

## **This Week's First Reading: *Malachi 3:1-4***

Thus says the Lord God: <sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

## **This Week's Canticle: *Benedictus***

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

## *Benedictus continued*

- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

## **This Week's Second Reading: *Philippians 1:3-11***

My brothers and sisters, <sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup>to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

## **This Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:1-6***

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

## **Next Week's First Reading: *Zephaniah 3:14-20***

<sup>14</sup>Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup>The LORD has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. <sup>17</sup>The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing <sup>18</sup>as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. <sup>19</sup>I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. <sup>20</sup>At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

## **Next Week's Canticle: *Isaiah 12:2-6***

- 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.
- 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
- 4 And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.
- 5 Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.
- 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

## **Next Week's Second Reading: *Philippians 4:4-7***

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## **Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:7-18***

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' <sup>12</sup>Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we

## *Luke 3:7-18 continued*

do?’ <sup>13</sup>He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’ <sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

<sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.